DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 083 356 UD 013 893

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TITLE	A Principal's Handbook for Shared Control in Urban Community Schools. Draft.
INSTITUTION	Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. Teachers College.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	1 Sep 73
GRANT	OEG-0-72-4401
NOTE	61p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Organization; Administrator Attitudes; City Problems; Community Attitudes; *Community Control; Community Involvement; Decentralization; *Decision Making; Educational Administration; *Neighborhood Schools; Principals; *School Community Relationship; *Urban Schools

ABSTRACT

This handbook is organized by action areas that a school principal needs to consider in creating, maintaining, and utilizing successful involvement with the neighboring communities. Each area discusses the range of options available to the principal. Building principals are thus able to select features to fit their particular communities. The areas are: (1) why share control; (2) when to share control and what to expect; (3) who should be involved; (4) what they should do; (5) how the group should be organized; and, (6) how to help. Sample budgets and sample by-laws are appended. [For full abstract, and companion volume referred to, see UD 013 892.] (Author/RJ)

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"A PRINCIPAL'S HANDBOOK FOR SHARED CONTROL IN URBAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS"

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September 1, 1973

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The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant (OEG 0-72-4401) with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official National Institute of Education position or policy.

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook should help building principals to create, support, and utilize neighborhood involvement in school decision making. Here "involvement" means participation in, and sharing of, decisions about the education of children. As such, it is distinct from the more common sort of involvement which is only advisory in nature or which is intended as an instrument of the school's more traditional public relations efforts. The difference is in the effect: this handbook deals with neighborhood involvement which is, or which can be, authoritative and binding.

A number of guides are already available for the creation of advisory or public relations-oriented involvement. But despite the increasingly frequent official mandates from State and Federal agencies and public pressures from the system's community base, school principals who wish to share some amount of control with the communities they serve have not had much operational help with that process. This manual is designed to fill that need.

Shared control (which is explained in more detail later) is the first premise of this work. The second premise is a commitment to local options. Every principal must respond to a very specific combination of neighborhood goals, needs, and resources. That local situation will determine much about how neighborhood involvement is realized. The handbook is a synthesis of the best and most recent research and evaluation in its

field: it is intended to be a comprehensive listing of the practices which empirical data and field experiences indicate have led to successfully shared control.

Nonetheless, the building principal still faces a great many choices about how to combine the practices described here to fit the particular needs of his or her particular neighborhood. The handbook will be most useful to those principals who want to, or who cannot avoid, community involvement at a level described here as shared control. But there are undoubtedly some principals who do not believe in that. They will not be persuaded by any handbook supported by any accumulation of evidence (such as that contained in the accompanying interpretive essay). If they change their practices, it will be because they have been forcefully convinced to do so by the communities they serve. At that point, if they retain their jobs, these principals may discover a use for the techniques and procedures outlined here.

The role of a principal in creating and working with a mechanism of shared control is different from mobilizing a community. This is not a manual for community organizing except insofar as some of those skills may be helpful in bringing schools and communities closer to each other. It is focused on what the school principal can do in the individual community school located in an immediate community surrounding.

However, since the same factors which determine success at the neighborhood level recur at other organizational levels as well (e.g., goals, structure, process, support, etc.), this handbook may be a useful guide to other kinds of school administrators. Community district superintendents, or headquarters specialists in community relations, may wish to check their own practices against those recommended here. They may also make use of this guide in in-service training courses and in community involvement workshops. The same general point applies to citizens. Both lay citizens and professional educators are participants in control sharing. Both groups should be equally interested in what makes that involvement work. These options and recommendations are written specifically for school principals, but since they identify the key points in a shared process, they should be useful to communities as well.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the handbook concentrates on community involvement in the

urban setting. How people relate to their social institutions varies widely by such factors as urban/suburban/rural setting, class, region of the country, and so on. For many reasons the task of effective community involvement is more difficult in the neighborhoods of the big cities than it is anywhere else. Just as every neighborhood is to some extent a unique constellation of strengths and needs, there are also regularities among all neighborhoods. The principles and practices outlined here should be of interest to anyone who wants to improve relations between public schools and the communities they serve.

Few things are more difficult to arrange than the authoritative interaction of lay people and professionals in an area of largely technical decision making which is of extreme importance to both of them. When, as it must be, that interaction is complicated by differences in race, ethnicity, and political purpose, the difficulties of what is essentially an excercise in constitution building are apparent. The task is at least as complicated and perhaps as important as the design of a school's curriculum yet it seldom gets the same careful attention.

The handbook's recommendations have been based on an extensive study of urban school/community relations at the building level. Cities from all parts of the United States cooperated in identifying mechanisms that had successfully put administrators and lay people together in decision making about the school. Several national organizations in education were also polled to find successful practices. State, Federal, and local program evaluations provided relevant data. More than three hundred sources from education and related fields were analyzed for the light they could shed on these problems. The evidence about community involvement in other social welfare areas (health, social work, and housing) was searched in order to uncover promising practices there that could be of use to urban school administrators. Finally, a draft version of the handbook was circulated among panels of experts in school/community relations. The panels included school principals, superintendents, community relations specialists, and specialists in research on this area.

The handbook has six sections; each section deals with a major component of neighborhood involvement. The sections reflect operational necessity in that they are grouped by areas for action and are arranged in

the order that a principal would need to consider while building community involvement. An appendix gives some prototype budgets for the support of neighborhood groups at various resource levels. An expanded discussion of the options, along with specific citations to the evidence on which the recommendations are based, is included in the companion interpretive essay.

I. WHY SHARE CONTROL?

The importance and complexity of school governance suggest caution in changing it. Current decision-making arrangements place a great deal of the available control at the discretion of the principal. That control should only be shared if there is reason to believe that significant increases in goal achievement will result. This section defines control sharing and relates it to the achievement of the most important and most commonly accepted goals of public schooling.

DEFINITION OF SHARED CONTROL

Shared control has three characteristics: (1) the regular opportunity for community participation in a comprehensive range of policy matters; (2) the inclusion of all relevant points of view; and (3) the probability that the community's participation will have an effect on school policy. One term in each of the three parts needs clarification. "Policy" refers to important or significant matters that affect the children of the school. "Relevant" points of view include the interests of all the school's parents; it also includes non-parent community members such as businessmen, religious groups, social welfare agencies, etc.* "Probability" refers to the fact that since we are talking about shared, not total, control, we can expect to find the community's will prevailing some of the time on some issues. Probability refers to compromise and cooperation and that applies to both communities and administrators

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*For a more detailed discussion, see Part III, "Who Should Be Involved." The community involvement mechanism described here does not include in its membership either para-professionals or teachers. Both play crucial roles in school/community relations, but both are already firmly established in the decision process of local schools. Their influence does not depend on access to this mechanism since they already share control; their additional presence in the group discussed here would also raise conflict-of-interest questions.

within the control-sharing arrangement. It is extremely important to recognize at the outset that control is not an either/or situation. It can be shared in almost infinite (but poorly understood) gradations. For principals this is significant because it means that the control situation can be shaped precisely to the needs of both the community and the school's professional staff. Control can be shared both with respect to how much and in what, and those determinations can be based on the local reality.

The definition of shared control stresses the regular opportunities for potentially binding or authoritative participation in significant matters. This is a distinct departure from the most common current practices in which involvement either stops at the advisory level (that is, at the discretion of the principal the neighborhood's opinions may or may not affect the school's policy) or it is focused on traditional public relations. In the traditional public relations model, involvement resembles manipulation. It concentrates on communications from the school to the community, stresses support for the status quo, assigns citizens a passive and dependent consumer role, and preserves the autonomy of professionals. The distinction between shared control on the one hand and advisory and public relations involvement on the other, is clearly a matter of the effect or impact of the neighborhood's activities. In shared control, the probability of the community making a definitive input is taken for granted. The question becomes how much control is to be shared and over what (see Section IV).

Being a school principal takes years of training, a great deal of judgment, and lots of energy. Most school principals feel that they have little enough power to deal with the tasks they face: why should they diminish what they have by sharing it with others? The most persuasive reason to do so would be evidence that sharing resulted in increased achievement of the school's goals. Increases in community participation have been associated with increased goal achievement in four areas: (1) education achievement of pupils; (2) institutional responsiveness; (3) support for schooling; and (4) democratic principle. [Note: Each of these areas is treated briefly below. For a detailed consideration of the evidence, see the interpretive essay.]

* * * * * *

Both educators and neighborhoods share an interest in increasing the achievement of children. Recent research has made the case for an association between high (or increased) student achievement and high (or increased) parent involvement. The kind of involvement which is most clearly related to student achievement is the child-centered involvement of parents with the family-based activities of their own children. Parents who build civic skills by participating in educational policy determination for an entire school should also be more inclined to work purposefully with their own children. Beyond that, there may be a transfer of the sense of personal efficacy which the parent experiences upon participating in school decision making to the child who may then also feel more personally efficacious, more in control, and thus more motivated to learn. The parent's sense of increased control may generalize to the child's sense of increased control. In Equality of Educational Opportunity, James S. Coleman found that the pupil attitude factor which measured the extent to which a pupil felt control over his own destiny, ". . . appears to have a stronger relationship to achievement than do all the 'school' factors together. . . ." In addition, the parent's interest in the school may set an example for the child to emulate and the fact that the school is responsive to the parent may help persuade the child that the school is a relevant and empathetic institution.

GOAL 1:

EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT

All of these effects are strongest where the involvement itself is the most intense and significant. Parents who participate the most are most likely to reap these benefits, but the benefits are also available to other community members who are represented by their peers.

* * * * * *

One major way in which the neighborhood school responds to its clientele is by increasing the educational achievement of students. However, the content of what is learned, the process through which it is taught, the identities of the people who do the teaching, and other similar factors, are often

GOAL 2:

INCREASED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS

of considerable interest to the school's constituents. As the neighborhood presence grows in terms of numbers, time, knowledgeability, and scope of involvement, it becomes more likely that it will present demands and follow up on them in ways that ensure greater congruity between school and community. The evidence shows that professionals (administrators and especially teachers) recognize concerned and actively involved parents and pay increased attention to their children and to the needs expressed by their parents.

That process works both ways. The more professionals and lay people interact, the more opportunities professionals have to persuade lay people of the wisdom of professionally recommended policy. In the first instance, the school changes in response to the citizens; in the second, the citizens' own goals come to coincide with those of the institution. Responsiveness is thus a two-way street and the leadership role, like the participation in decisions, is shared between lay and professional people. In both cases, the perceived distance between the two is lessened and the local school and its clientele have moved closer because of neighborhood involvement.

* * * * * *

GOAL 3:

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLING

To exist, urban schools need at least the passive acquiescence of the neighborhoods they serve. To succeed, urban schools need the support of those neighborhoods. Getting more support for the schools, both financial and affective, has been one of the traditional purposes for involving communities. Support for the schools goes up if what the school does is close to what the neighborhood wants it to do. When neighborhood participation makes the school more responsive to neighborhood desires, then the agreement between the two will also increase support for the school.

This relationship is reinforced at the individual level. People tend to approve of what they have a hand in determining. When a person invests time and energy in something, there is a tendency to value that thing and to become more closely identified with it on

a personal and social basis than might otherwise be the case. Being around professionals, para-professionals, and other people who are committed to the school increases the amount of favorable information a participant will receive about the school. Thus at the personal level, increasing involvement will increase the support which most participants feel for the school and its staff.

* * * * * *

The last of the reasons why control should be shared has to do with the value in this society that those people whose lives are affected by an institution should, in some fashion, participate in the control of that institution. Schools affect important aspects of the social and material well-being that their students will enjoy. Schools are directly relevant to the ambitions which parents have for their children and they are major public agencies in terms of taxes spent and social missions performed. At the neighborhood level these effects suggest that there should be neighborhood participation in school decision making. Participation affects educational achievement, institutional responsiveness, and support for schooling, but even if it did not, it would still be justified on this principle alone.

GOAL 4:

DEMOCRATIC

PRINCIPLE

* * * * * *

These four very important goals can be achieved through community involvement. Two central points need to be made here. The first is that the probability and the amount of these benefits are related to the intensity and significance of the involvement. The benefits to the school and community are directly related to how many people participate how much in important decisions. In this field, where little is risked, nothing is gained. The evidence clearly indicates that <u>community involvement is successful when it is significant</u>. The second point is that the four goal areas are cumulative. Where a school involves people because it wishes to increase achievement, that involvement will also contribute to responsiveness, support, and the democratic principle. Involvement is justified on the <u>total</u> goals achieved, not simply on any single goal.

II. WHEN TO SHARE CONTROL AND WHAT TO EXPECT?

The most obvious answer to the question when to share control, is whether the need is felt to raise goal achievement in the areas just described. Involvement is a purposeful strategy that is directly relevant to what administrators want the schools to do. The second answer to the "when" question relates to the need for help from the community. The creation of a temporary "citizens committee" is a common tactic in districts that raise their own money through elections. The fact that such committees are often seen by the voters as undemocratic ruses should tell urban administrators something about the timing of involvement. If participation is expected to provide a reservoir of support then it must be built well before it is needed.

The two most profound problems of urban education are race relations and money. Both problems generate intense feeling and neither can be solved without the cooperation and involvement of urban communities. Urban school conflicts often turn around deeply felt racial and ethnic beliefs; the more experienced and knowledgeable the group is, the more likely it is to be of assistance. That suggests that in order to have such a resource, even those principals who believe their neighborhoods to be quiet, passive, and allegiant, should seriously consider increasing involvement. On the other hand, an existing crisis can sometimes provide the opportunity for mobilization (see next section, "Who Should be Involved--Crisis Origin"). Thus, to summarize, involvement should begin when increased goal achievement is sought. It should start well before it is needed. It should be sought in quiet as well as in crisis-afflicted communities.

Historically, increases in involvement have come mostly in response to crisis and conflict. That association has made a lot of administrators apprehensive about the community involvement. Inviting lay people into school decision making will seem like asking for trouble. For example, on a general level, the goals of community involvement may seem uniformly desirable, but on a practical level, there is likely to be disagreement

about them. Some citizens may feel that their local school does not deserve support because they are dissatisfied with the building or with the curriculum or with the personnel. Groups in the neighborhood will almost certainly disagree about which specific aspects of their school should be how responsive to which people, how soon. Where interests differ and resources are limited, disagreement about priorities is practically inevitable. Principals will not need reminding that there is a certain amount of conflict in a neighborhood whether or not a mechanism for involvement exists. The presence of a well-designed mechanism for community involvement provides a channel for conflict and enhances the prospect it will be successfully resolved.

There is another point which is perhaps even more important and frequently overlooked. A great deal of the disagreement inherent in neighborhoods reflects differences of interest and of perception which are quite legitimate. Conflict arises simply from the pursuit of many <u>different</u> people's self-interest. It is to be expected <u>when important</u> public values are at stake. It is probably fair to say that most schools are surrounded by neighborhoods that appear to be quiescent about school policy issues. When public decisions are made, they are often made by what seems to be consensus. That is, everyone appears to agree on a course of action. Consensus is an important thing. Where it is possible to make decisions unanimously, the benefits of harmony and good will are desirable. But, there are many instances in which some people will be unwilling to agree with a particular course; they will want to continue to pursue their own interests because they feel they are right. In those instances the most that can be hoped for is that people will <u>consent</u> to the decision although they will be unwilling to join a consensus about it. (It is relevant to note that American government rests not on consensus, but on the consent of the governed.) Thus, when some people's interests are not reflected in a decision, they allow it to be carried out, but reserve the right to continue to press for their belief.

The difference between these two patterns can be crucial for school administrators who are used to superficially harmonious community "participation."

Consensus is a useful way to proceed, but if it is unobtainable, principals should not expect people to give up the differences which prompted the disagreement.

Conflict is not a sign of failure. The absence of unanimity does not mean something is wrong. Where interests differ and resources are limited, citizens should understand their differences, agree to the resolution, but NOT abandon the pursuit of their own interests. The informed consent of the neighborhood is as honorable a goal as consensus and quite often more realistic.

There are different kinds of conflict. Some conflict is constructive in that it accurately registers what people want the school to do. It signals the school about the different interests it must try to serve and provides valuable and constructive guidance. Then there is destructive or rancorous conflict in which people pursue their differences to the point that they are no longer willing to work together to solve common problems. That willingness to work together is the definition of "community" and it can be destroyed by uncontrolled conflict. There has been much less rancorous conflict in schools than the media's attention to a few newsworthy events might indicate. In addition, the rhetorical high water mark of demands for total community control has passed. There are very few places where communities wish to replace professionals in operating the schools. Nonetheless, principals are right to be concerned about the possibility of uncontrolled conflict. Where it has destroyed communities (and careers and the teaching/learning environment) it has done so for two reasons that are directly relevant to this manual. First, no effective mechanisms existed to channel and resolve the conflict. Second, the people involved (professionals and lay people) lacked the experience necessary to handle their disagreements.

CONFLICT

If there is a minimal level of conflict in a neighborhood, then establishing an involvement mechanism

may be relatively costless. If there is already more substantial conflict, then the presence of the mechanism can only help with an already difficult situation. But what about conflicts which develop--and escalate--after the group's establishment? What should the principal do about those? The answer is the same with or without a mechanism for community involvement. In great part, of course, it depends on the issue. The answer to the question "Who's right?" determines a great deal about the principal's response. But in the absence of that information, the first reaction of most principals would be to mediate while staying relatively uninvolved. If mediation fails, if the stakes escalate, and if the principal joins in, then it is with the same risks as are always involved in conflict situations. The point is that, when conflict is unavoidable, the principal's decision to become involved or not is a personal one. But the outcome of that conflict may depend on how carefully the group was designed and supported by the principal.

The opposite side of the coin from visible conflict is neighborhood apathy. The political culture of some communities emphasizes respect for tradition and deference to authority. Such communities often appear to be very allegiant and quiet about educational matters until some grievance precipitates a change. Principals who work with these communities will need to be aware of their attitudes and perhaps also of the need to build knowledgeable involvement prior to crises. Other communities are so alienated from their schools--and vice versa--and the schools are such forbidding institutions in some places, that there is little if any involvement. A more common pattern is the situation in which the opportunities for involvement offered by the school to parents and other citizens are so trivial and so tangential that they do not elicit any significant response. Principals who use advisory committees to rubber stamp decisions which have already been made, who consistently override advice, or who never ask parents about policy questions central to teaching and learning should not conclude that their neighborhoods are apathetic. It is much more likely that the citizens have made a reasonable response to an unrewarding opportunity.

Principals are in the middle of what happens between schools and communities. What are the likely

personal consequences of increased involvement for them? Principals who believe their current stock of power to be inadequate to the demands of their jobs would probably rather increase their control of the school affairs instead of sharing it. Principals may also take some consolation in the fact that they are not alone among professionals in having to accept greatly increased lay involvement. The general (and irresistible) societal trend toward more democratic participation by urban citizens, clients, and consumers is affecting schools along with health, social welfare, and housing institutions. The reality of community and client participation is quite simply a new boundary on professional decisions. Those decisions are already circled by participants with whom the principal has to share control. Teacher unions, factions within the staff, other building administrators, and numerous bureaucratic superiors are already thoroughly involved in the control of the school. Thus, most principals already recognize that autonomy or the idea of solely personal control is an illusion. The neighborhood group may stabilize and systematize what is already a reality, but whether it does or not, the group is an opportunity for the principal to capitalize on involvement for the purpose of achieving the school's goals. Finally, there is some evidence that indicates the paradoxical result of decreasing personal control through sharing it may actually instead enhance the principal's ability to succeed with the school's goals. The remainder of this handbook describes how neighborhood involvement can be realized. The mechanisms described have been designed specifically to cope with, and to make creative use of some disagreement, and to overcome apathy and reluctance on the part of urban neighborhood residents.

DECREASED PERSONAL CONTROL

III. WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Who speaks for "The Community"? That question is one of the most difficult faced by all urban public administrators, not just school people. An accurate reflection of neighborhood opinions, strengths, and needs is one of the most useful things which a neighborhood group can provide the principal. The group's ability to do that will depend on how it was selected. The importance of elections will be stressed here, but elections are not something which the principal either can or should control. On the other hand, the principal is a directly concerned individual who bears a good deal of the responsibility for the quality of school/community relations. The whole purpose of this manual is to give the principals the kind of information they need in order to play an active leadership role in community involvement. In this area, as in many others, the principal's influence will be substantial. (And of course, the principal's responsibility not to abuse that role--by setting up a committee of cronies, for example--is also substantial.) Thus, the principal may wish to restrict his role in the selection process to calling attention to a number of desirable attributes of involvement, and perhaps to suggesting ways in which they may be achieved.

For example, it is desirable that the group be broadly representative; it should reflect all segments of the neighborhood or it will not be seen as a legitimately representative group. Second, it should give the school access to both the existing and the potential contributions of the neighborhood. That means that in addition to people who are already active in the school or who are already involved in public affairs, people whose potential exceeds their experience should be encouraged to take part. There should be some young people, and some people who have not yet become known throughout the neighborhood. Other social welfare agencies in the community may help to identify these people as can churches and social groups. Involving these people can demonstrate the group's intention to include all points of view; it can provide training for additional people; and it can ensure

a pool of qualified indigenous leaders who will provide continuity to the group over time.

* * * * * *

Community involvement can originate in response to a particular event or as a part of a conscious effort. It can also be a logical development from the efforts of existing groups. Where involvement begins in response to a dramatic event or crisis such as a budget reduction, or a personnel controversy, that crisis can be used as a basis for mobilizing a more general purpose and lasting effort. Since the dramatic event will already have focused attention on the schools, the task becomes one of balancing the points of view represented and insuring that the involvement does not dissolve when the crisis is past. It helps a lot if the principal can feel that the total burden of resolving the crisis, the total responsibility for finding a solution, is not solely hers or his. An attitude of openness, an expectation that others can and will come forward, helps make that participation a reality. The experience gained by the early, crisis-stimulated participants can contribute to the later success of the group. Involvement which originates in crisis situations can provide the basis for more stable interaction; but in order for that to happen, it is necessary that participation be expanded and the group's concerns be widened to include more than the original incident or event. The principal should keep in mind that different people are interested in different things. Adding issues and topics to the agenda of a group increases the number of people who may wish to be involved.

CRISIS ORIGINS

Community involvement may also be developed without the assistance of a precipitating event. It can be a response to a government mandate or it can be planned and initiated by educators or other concerned people. However, when it is initiated by professionals, especially by professionals who do not live in the neighborhood, then it is extremely important that neighborhood residents be encouraged to

PLANNED BEGINNING

participate as soon as possible. Without that early participation, relevant information is greatly reduced and so is the crucial identification of the community with the involvement mechanism.

The third way in which an involvement mechanism can come into being is as a logical extension of an existing group. Advisory groups or parents associations have sometimes provided a successful foundation for more intensive and authoritative involvement. The advantages of building on these groups is the ready availability of experienced people. On the other hand, since the purposes and requirements of control sharing are different from those of advice and traditional public relations, the features of the existing group (composition, topical focus, etc.) should be carefully reviewed and modified as necessary according to the topics dealt with here.

EXTENSION

Member Selection

How do people become members of school-related groups? The most common way is simply by volunteering. People who show an interest in school affairs make themselves available or are asked to serve on such groups. Although the fact of volunteering guarantees some motivation to take part, it does not guarantee that the volunteer can do an adequate job of speaking for the neighborhood. Since the poorest people are least likely to have the time or inclination to volunteer, a member selection process which rests only on volunteerism will not represent their interests.

In the case of a continuing group which is expanded, the members of the existing group often select either their successors or the additional members. Unfortunately, since people tend to choose those others who are most like themselves, this self-perpetuating procedure freezes an earlier balance of views and in a very short period of time the group may lose its ability to reflect the total interests of the neighborhood.

Three alternate selection methods should be considered: (1) appointment; (2) election; and (3) a combination of appointment and election. The same questions arise in all instances--who is to do the selection and on what basis?

For a building principal to appoint those with whom control is shared is not recommended for several obvious reasons having to do with the possibility of abuse, the probable lack of neighborhood confidence in the appointees, and the simple fact that the procedure is incompatible with the democratic principle of self-governance. It might be possible to allow the Parent-Teacher Associations, block associations, tenant associations, etc., to appoint a number of members. However, since such appointments will be objectionable to people on grounds largely similar to those against allowing administrator to make appointments, it is not recommended. Appointment should be used only in unusual circumstances, for example, the selection of a temporary group charged with initiating more systematic involvement. Even there, extreme caution should be used so that these screening groups or election committees are perceived as being fairly representative of the community. The most common, and perhaps most accurate objection to appointed groups is that they are not "representative." Including some manifestation of religion, ethnicity, attitude toward the school, attitude toward a variety of relevant political and social issues, plus other situationally relevant characteristics--and displaying appropriate combinations of all of those characteristics--all within a group of perhaps a dozen people is a fantastic task. The inevitable result will be that some people, perhaps many people, will feel left out. Thus, it is much better to give people the opportunity to decide for themselves whom they want to represent them.

APPOINTMENT

Elections are the preferable method of selection since they begin the process of involvement on the broadest possible basis and help insure the acceptability of its results. The proper conduct of an election, even on a small scale such as a neighborhood is likely to require considerable planning. An election committee may be formed to help plan and con-

ELECTIONS

duct the election. The following points are a general guide to election procedure. They may, of course, be modified to fit particular situations.

... Any adult living in the school's geographic attendance area should be eligible to vote. In the ordinary course of things, parents will be the most interested and will dominate the election, but other citizens should have the opportunity to vote as well. Membership, and certainly not dues-paying membership, in a school association should not be required in order to vote.

... Any adult living in the attendance area should be eligible to run for office except those people who are currently employed by the local school.

[Note: The Special Case of Para-Professionals and Teachers

Para-professionals and teachers are likely to require special attention from the principal. Most para-professionals are selected for employment exactly because of their knowledge of the community and their ability to bridge the gap between it and the school. It may be difficult for them to agree that a characteristic which qualifies them to participate in one capacity should prevent them from taking part in another. They may resent what may seem to be a denial of a democratic privilege. Of course the same argument can be made by any teacher who lives in the community. There are, nonetheless, two compelling arguments against their eligibility for membership on the shared control group. First, if the group is indeed to share control in the sense of significant policy determination, then it would be a conflict of interest to have the school's employees determining their own policy. Think for example of the difficulties which would arise in personnel selection and in program evaluation. The second objection is that the school's employees are already influential participants in policy determination. Simply because they implement policy, they will also inevitably influence it. In addition, professional unions and associations are zealous guardians of the interest of teachers, and to some extent, of para-professionals. Allowing teachers and other school

employees to serve on this mechanism of community involvement would move away from a new balance of interests and back in the direction of professional dominance which the mechanism is designed inter alia to remedy.]

. . . Notice of the impending election should be prominently displayed, especially outside the school, well in advance of the closing date for nominations. Leaflets, newspaper, church and club announcements, and telephone chains may also be used. Careful attention will need to be given at this point, as at all others throughout this guide, to make any information available in all of the languages used by the area's residents.

. . . A nominating petition, but with a small number of required signatures (say, 25), should be used to place a name on the ballot. People should not be allowed to sign more petitions than some fraction (say, one-half) of the available seats up for election.

. . . Candidates' nights and other opportunities to make views known should be arranged. Attendance will be improved if these are held along with other school activities, especially where those activities involve a lot of children as performers.

. . . All candidates should run at large and simply for membership, not for pre-designated positions like chair person. This allows the group, once elected, to determine for itself its own organization and leadership. Most attendance areas are small enough to do away with the need to have people selected on any smaller geographic or other basis--grade level for example. For high schools, where attendance areas cover more than one neighborhood and it seems desirable to elect group members from smaller areas, extreme caution should be used in dividing up those areas. Drawing lines around and between areas guarantees the election of particular points of view; the group which results could easily be unfairly representative. On the other hand, electing everyone at large (that is, from the whole geographic area, not from parts) can end up the same way. A minority of say 20 per cent of those voting--who might have been able to send a representative to the group if their area had been designated as

an election district--may, under the at-large procedure simply never be able to select anyone. The dilemma is a real one; which method is more fair depends on particular local conditions.

. . . The election should be scheduled at a time that will be most convenient to most people (a weekday afternoon and evening, preferably including the night of a school "Open House"). Since turnout will be small, it may be helpful to consider holding the election over a 36-hour period, or running it at the same time that people are voting in another city, state or Federal election.

. . . The place of voting should be the school. Where, as in the case of a bussed-in population, there are two attendance areas, there should be centrally located, easily accessible places to vote in both areas.

. . . Absentee ballots should be provided as long as they arrive in time to be counted with regular ballots. Whether or not it is necessary to provide for absentee ballots is something that should be decided locally according to available resources and probable need. The same holds true of several of the other features suggested here.

. . . The ballot itself should be secret, reproduced in all relevant languages, and the order in which the names appear should be determined by chance.

. . . Voters must present proof of residence (but without a minimum time limit for residence) and should either be checked off a prepared list or added to an alphabetized list at the time of voting. Voters should sign the list as they vote. (These records are confidential and should be retained as such by the principal or the election committee.)

. . . The election will not be valid unless a specified minimum turn-out of eligible voters is achieved (perhaps 5 per cent of the attendance area population or 20 per cent of the parents).

. . . The ballot count should be public and prompt.

. . . People with the highest number of votes will be elected.

. . . New elections should be held every year either in the fall or the spring. A spring election has the advantage of allowing some time for informing the new members prior to their taking office. A fall election may get a higher turnout, especially of residents who are new to the attendance area. Because of graduation and family mobility, a school's parent clientele turns over quite rapidly. The yearly election of at least one-third of the membership (see V, "Organization") provides replacement members and can keep the group representative of the neighborhood.

Elections can maximize the amount of self-determination exercised by a neighborhood. But elections do not necessarily guarantee that the membership of the group will meet every desired characteristic. The procedures suggested above are exactly that, suggestions which need to be reviewed in light of local circumstances. If it seems likely that an election will produce unfair results or inaccurate representation, then the principal and the community will want to consider ways to improve the selection process. One way to ensure the fairness of the election procedure itself is to have the election conducted by an outside agency--for example, the city board of elections. That is however likely to be more costly than it is worth. Neighborhood-based elections can be run properly by an impartial election committee that is aware of the need for procedural safeguards of the sort described here.

One method of insuring a broadly representative group is to create a "delegate assembly." Delegate assemblies have representatives who are chosen by their organizations, and sent to the assembly as representatives of those particular groups. Delegate assemblies have worked well as coordinating devices on a city-wide basis for Community Action Programs. If a neighborhood has several active and concerned education-related organizations, a delegate assembly may be helpful in representing those groups. Block associations, tenant groups, social welfare agencies and councils, grade level organizations, and others might, for example, appoint some delegates to the group. (However, the need for representation of all parts of the community,

including the less organized people, should be carefully considered. A delegate assembly, by itself, is unlikely to deliver satisfactory representation.)

It is obviously possible to combine the delegate assembly procedure with an at-large election. For example, half of the places in a group may be assigned to organizations in the neighborhood. Those organizations may then either appoint or elect their representatives. The other half of the places would be filled by an election. While this combination might help to insure broad representation, it might also effectively double the influence of existing groups. In addition to getting to choose their own representatives through the delegate assembly procedure, those groups may be able to use their organizational resources to unduly influence the election.

COMBINED ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The principal needs to keep in mind that the methods for selecting the group's members will strongly influence the sort of group which emerges. The principal has the responsibility and the opportunity to influence some aspects of this process. There is a fine line between, on the one hand, encouraging and assisting neighborhood involvement, and on the other, unduly determining its outcome. The chances of crossing that line can be reduced if the principal acts openly, carefully, and in cooperation with the community.

THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN MEMBER SELECTION

An election can minimize, but not eliminate recriminations about the social class, racial, and ethnic make-up of the group. A properly conducted election provides a forum for all points of view--supportive and critical--to be expressed and then allows that expression to be reflected in the composition of the group. If grade levels are relevant (for example, the parents of younger and of older children sometimes have important disagreements) then grade levels should be reflected in the group. If groups feel strongly about innovation

(either for or against) or particular teaching practices, then they should have a voice in the group. If there are anti-school, or anti-administration forces, they, too, have a right to compete for the support of the neighborhood. The election itself will help people feel that the school is responsive to them; when periodic re-elections occur, those elections will also help people get their complaints acted upon and insure that the school is responsive to them.

The prospect of conflict is not a happy one for most school administrators even though (or perhaps because) they deal with so much of it. The possibility that elections--or lay governance of any sort--will encourage factions and blocs and controversy makes many administrators wary of community involvement. Yet most administrators recognize that their neighborhoods are not homogeneous and that controversy is never very far from the surface. Even at the level of the neighborhood school there are important differences which need careful and respectful attention. If the goals suggested earlier are to be realized, then treating community involvement in all its facets as a matter for systematic attention <u>over time</u> is clearly recommended. It should be stressed that involvement is a continuing process: representative groups working in technical areas like education take time to become established, knowledgeable, and accomplished participants. Principals working with such groups should be at least as patient with that group's training and education as they were with the long process of their own professional preparation.

IV. WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?

From everyone's point of view, this is the paramount question about community involvement. It has two aspects: how much control is to be shared; and, control over what. When the subject of sharing control comes up, many principals tend to think of it in absolute terms; yet no principal has absolute authority or total power over the things which happen within his or her school. Neither total professional control nor total community control is a possibility. A little reflection will indicate that most decisions are compromises worked out between different positions. Many decisions are strongly influenced by an estimate of the anticipated reaction of different groups. How will the teachers react? What about the para-professionals? Can this be made more acceptable to those who favor open classrooms? Every time a principal modifies a decision to take someone else's views into account, control is being shared.

The informal sharing of power is one aspect of this. Principals often seek out and defer to the judgment of others on specific matters of education policy. They also avoid making some judgments that they know will be unacceptable to powerful factions or groups within the school. The net effect of these informal realities is to locate policy determination between the principal and others--especially teachers. But there are formal restraints as well. School principals operate within a net of contractual obligations (especially about personnel matters), legislative mandates (the State school code will cover parts of virtually every aspect of the school), central office regulations, special program regulations, and constitutional requirements. All of those boundaries are better known to administrators than to lay people, and they will be the source of constant friction unless a concerted effort is made to outline to the community the impact of these restraints on the autonomy of the local school and its local control-sharing group. That task is the principal's responsibility.

Thus, schools are already conglomerations of legal checks and balances and informal alliances of

teachers, para-professionals, headquarters, grade level, and program groups, existing parent groups, and others--all striving to take part in "professional" decisions. The difference between the current informal reality of shared control and the creation of a neighborhood group for the same purpose is not a small thing. The group will have important consequences for the principal. However, from one point of view, the group is a formalization and an extension of what is already an unsystematic reality for most urban principals. Because that is the case, principals are already in possession of some ways to make up their minds about how much control they feel should be shared.

What sorts of concerns do principals usually have about this matter? What standards are appropriately used to determine their position? It is always difficult to make these decisions in the abstract, without the guidance specific facts give. Yet, the initial decision about a community involvement mechanism will usually have to be made in a sort of "have or have-not" lump. Should the principal become committed to a control sharing mechanism or not? The stormy history of decentralization in some cities, the relative lack of experience with control-sharing groups at the neighborhood level, and the natural striving toward independence common to all professionals are likely to be sources of real apprehension. That apprehension will have to be weighed against the prospects for increased goal achievement along with whatever situational factors exist (for example, a mandate from the central board or from Federal agencies).

HOW MUCH CONTROL SHOULD BE SHARED?

The principal will also need to consider some other things in making the initial, overall judgment. What are the prospects for accurate representation of neighborhood needs and interests. Will the group's involvement help achieve the school's goals; and if so, how much will it help? How much power will the group have--that is, when the principal and the group disagree, whose judgment will prevail?

The problem of legal authority is closely linked to the question of power. The statutes governing most school systems make the building principal "the responsible head of the school." Legally, the principal is responsible

LEGAL AUTHORITY

for what happens in the school even though de facto control over school matters may be widely shared. What about situations in which decisions are made at least in part by other people and the principal dissents. If something goes wrong, the principal is responsible, not the other participants. Principals have reason to be concerned about this imbalance between their control of decisions and their responsibility for results. (The imbalance occurs not just between neighborhoods and principals but also between unions and principals.) The long-term resolution and one that will require lots of effort may be to find ways for lay groups at the neighborhood level to share decision-making responsibility (or accountability) in the same proportion that they share control. The election of the group should help with that, in that one of the consequences of bad judgment or unresponsiveness may be not being returned to the group. In the long run, we will probably have to find other ways to hold group members at least as accountable for their actions as are school board members. Those developments rest on changes in State education law that will be too slow in arriving to do school principals much immediate good with this difficult problem. In the short run principals will have to rely on their own persuasive powers and especially on their faith in the judgment of neighborhood people.

The question remains--in a dispute--can the neighborhood group overrule the principal? When push comes to shove, who must yield to whom? In almost every case, the neighborhood's ability to "control" things, which really means to influence, to participate, or to share control, will rest on the same sort of basis as does the principal's--the ability to convince other people that something is right or needs to be done. The amount of control is decided by the ability to attract supporters and to exploit advantages. In practically every instance, the result of shared control will be shared influence over the outcome, and that outcome will be a compromise. But, if it is not, if no compromise is possible, if differences are irreconcilable, then because of the legal authority of the principal, the principal can invoke that legal authority to prevail. Of course, the resort to legal authority is not without cost; its price is often hostility, disillusionment, and sometimes, a job.

Each principal will want to think through the way these factors enter into the particular situation at hand. The initial consideration may determine the

principal's overall orientation to neighborhood involvement, but involvement is made up of more precise things as well. For example, in what areas of the school's policy should the neighborhood group participate? Should its participation be the same in each area?

* * * * * *

There are five general areas of school policy: (1) curriculum; (2) budget; (3) teacher personnel; (4) administrative personnel; and (5) student affairs. In each area, the role to be played by the neighborhood group will depend on a series of factors which must be judged by the principal in cooperation with the group and with reference to the local situation. Again, speaking generally, these are:

CONTROL

OVER

WHAT

A. the interests and abilities of the neighborhood group itself;

B. other possible factors (teachers unions, the central board, community action groups, etc.);

C. legal restraints (Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, guidelines, contracts, etc.);

D. the estimated effects of the involvement on achieving the school's goals;

E. the availability of the means and opportunity to influence decisions.

Participation in school policy determination means participation in the overall direction, not the specific administration of the school. The distinction is a favorite adage of the textbooks but practicing administrators know how difficult it is to observe and maintain. Routine administrative decisions sometimes amount to policy in that they seriously affect many students (for example, the handling of records or the choice of testing materials) while "policy" announcements often have no measurable impact on what really happens in a given building. In addition, parent concerns are stimulated by specific incidents and getting something done about them inevitably crosses into administrative, not policy, concerns.

Three points should be made. First, the tug of war between "policy" and "administration" goes on all the time whether or not there is a mechanism of shared control. An effective mechanism can ameliorate it. Second, shared control should not be confined to such a small area or to such specific questions that it fails to affect what the school as a whole does. Third, the line between involvement in policy and in daily operations is a difficult but important one to establish. Sincere efforts to involve neighborhoods at the policy level can attract participation where it is most important while still maintaining the principal's ability to make day-to-day operating decisions.

1. Curriculum. The process and materials through which teaching and learning is conducted are often regarded as the province of experts, and expert knowledge is certainly a necessary input for this area. But lay people are often quite useful participants in determining community preferences, stimulating or supervising evaluations, reviewing current or proposed parts of the curriculum, and making recommendations and pushing for their adoption.

The principal will need to decide whether or not to encourage the neighborhood group to become involved in the spectrum of curriculum activities and if so, on what basis within the school (for all grades or only some? for all curricular topics or only some? which grades? which topics?). The neighborhood group itself should also make decisions about its interests. Having successful experiences with participation early in its development can motivate groups to greater achievement. If it can be arranged, a focus on an important, yet somewhat limited and feasible problem, is a good way for a group to begin. As the group gains in experience, more difficult problems can be tackled.

Lay people who interest themselves in technical matters usually need some assistance in dealing with professionals (especially where the professionals use their own jargon and expertise for partisan purposes). In the curriculum area, for example, the efforts of the neighborhood group should be coordinated with those of teachers and headquarters specialists who can also get a better

idea of the strengths and interests of neighborhoods by working with them. When a neighborhood group has been in existence for a couple of years, it will have become more familiar with State textbook laws, the whims of the national publishing industry, a variety of different ways to perform educational evaluations, and other topics which can enhance its involvement. As the expertise on both sides grows, the prospects for a creative school/community partnership increase.

2. Budget. Budget policy determines how resources are allocated in the school; a related set of questions deal with how schools are paid for at the district level. The neighborhood should be represented in district-wide decisions, it may wish to argue and lobby for more support, it may wish to participate in city-wide coalitions for state aid, but there is little else that it can do directly in the area of finance. The amount of money allotted to an individual school is usually determined by a formula which is beyond the principal's control. This is the kind of prior restraint which is often misunderstood but which can be cleared up through shared involvement in the budget process. Resource allocation <u>within</u> the school is another matter.

BUDGET POLICY

Some schools use a neighborhood parent group as a review board to consider that school's budget before it is sent on to the central office. Sometimes this review is organized on a school-wide, grade-level, or classroom basis. Unless there is ample time for the community groups to ask for, receive, and consider additional information, and unless the budget is presented in a manner that relates it to the neighborhood's concerns, these budget "reviews" are little more than an opportunity to approve what has already been decided.

Control sharing in the resource allocation process at the building level requires more extensive participation. In the budget process, as in other policy areas, there are two dimensions to community involvement: the range of topics dealt with and the effect of involvement. For example, the neighborhood's recommendations may be purely advisory in nature (the principal may retain the final say) or they may be binding, with the principal being required to incorporate the community's ideas into the budget. Or the effect of the group's involvement may

be somewhere in between those poles. The precise amount of the group's involvement, like its topical concentration, will be determined differently by the circumstances surrounding each local school. That is a process of mutual negotiation and experimentation, but the principal should keep in mind the cardinal rule that involvement succeeds when it is significant. In those cases in which the community's role is only advisory and the principal retains the decision-making authority, the need to respect community opinion and to keep the community informed will be increased exactly because of the expectations created by a mechanism of shared control.

With respect to the topical range of involvement, at least in the budget area, questions are very likely to go to the heart of the teaching and learning process. What teachers and materials go to which children? What are the priorities for new money requests and how are they to be determined? How can programs be evaluated and who should establish performance standards. Involvement can range over a variety of activities: establishing budget priorities, recommending budget categories and expenditures, and/or approving the final budget. The group's role can also vary from advice, to exhortation, to recommendation, to endorsement, to veto, and so on, according to the various stages of the budget process.

That process has been properly called "the lifeblood of organizations." Neighborhood participation in it implies a familiarity with existing needs and programs and their costs, and a familiarity with alternate programs. The knowledge base required to do that is likely to be a significant short-term obstacle to effective participation. Neighborhood involvement will be most successful when a nucleus of group members have established considerable familiarity with the process. Because of turnover within the group, this sort of training should be a constant concern of the principal. (See Part VI, "How to Help--Training.") Some of the best learning is done by doing. Neighborhood groups should plunge into the budget process early in the cycle of budget development. Because the whole sequence of budget decisions are so closely dependent on each other, early involvement is essential. It is also important that budget documents and forms themselves be related not to bureaucratically determined categories of expenditure (line items such as "instructional salaries," etc.) but rather to the

narrative justification for those expenditures (that is, program items such as "two teacher aides per kindergarten classroom," etc.).

School principals sometimes complain that no one understands the problems they face. Since the things which need to be done far outstrip the resources available to do them, the budget process is an opportunity to describe some fundamental constraints on the neighborhood school. Participation in that process can be realistic training for the group. A constant lament at the building level is the extent to which budget allocations are determined "downtown." Communities need to recognize that reality if they are to help in changing it. But many schools which have involved community groups in all the frustrations of budgeting have discovered that the process turns parents into informed and effective allies in the struggle for more money and more discretion in its use.

3. Personnel. The issues involved in neighborhood participation in personnel decisions are similar enough that the two areas of teaching and administrative staff may be considered together. Both rest on the ability of lay people to participate in decisions about professional competence--especially estimated future professional competence. That is a difficult task for anyone but it must be recognized that the professional's work will be practiced upon the neighborhood's children and therefore should reflect the neighborhood's interest directly.

PERSONNEL

The situation is a clear example of why control should be shared rather than vested in any single group or individual. Administrators alone, teachers alone, lay people alone cannot make adequate decisions about matters which are so central to all of their interests. Each must respect the other's strengths and competencies and those strengths should be reflected in the procedures established for decisions in this area. The use of a personnel subcommittee is a one common procedure. The subcommittee, which may work closely with administrators and teachers, can help review and establish personnel standards, interview new candidates, establish hiring criteria, etc. Sometimes such committees screen all

new candidates and recommend a small number (say three) from among whom the principal or school board makes a final selection. Subcommittee personnel may take part in teacher evaluations with the principal. The subcommittee may also participate in decisions about promotion, transfer, and dismissal. In the personnel area, as in the budget area, the effect of involvement can take a number of forms. The subcommittee can have veto power over personnel decisions but lack the power to require the administration to do any particular thing. Alternatively, the subcommittee's decisions may be regarded as final (either formally or informally), or they can be treated as non-binding recommendations. Obviously, this is an area in which the legal situation varies widely from city to city. The roles described here are listed as options for consideration as local circumstances warrant. Those local circumstances--especially the legal framework governing personnel matters--needs to be clearly communicated to the group so that exaggerated expectations are avoided.

Personnel is an especially sensitive area for neighborhood involvement. The hard won rights of professionals are clearly at stake and often jealously guarded. Just as clearly, the economic, social, and educational reasons for allowing qualified neighborhood residents access to those same positions, are also at stake. Fortunately for everyone involved, the "how much" and "in what" factors can be rather closely regulated in this area to achieve the desired effect in a specific school. In some aspects of personnel policy it may be better to have very authoritative involvement (binding decisions) but only over a limited portion of the policy area. Thus it might be impossible to tenure a teacher without the concurrence of the shared-control group, yet that group's role in promotions may be strictly advisory. The point is that "how much" and "in what" can be purposefully regulated to achieve a proper balance of interests. Obviously, arranging community involvement in the personnel area will require patience, energy, and good will on the part of everyone involved. The process of working out a satisfactory arrangement is likely to be stormy and educational.

Here again, principals will need to pay special attention to teachers. Shared control gives the community a role in school policy determination which is very likely to threaten some teachers. Since teachers carry out the school's face-to-face interaction with the community,

their cooperation is essential. It will be helpful to point out the many ways in which teacher interests continue to be protected (from their own associations and unions, by their daily participation in the school's affairs, by laws and regulations, by tenure, and especially, by their own diligent performance as educators). Whenever possible and appropriate, teachers should be invited to participate in tasks with the shared-control group.

4. Student Concerns. The last major area of school policy is that dealing with student-related concerns, especially discipline. Members of the group can help to review, plan and establish policies and procedures in this area. Again, the precise role played by the group can range from advice to policy making. As with other areas, the potential contributions from the neighborhood must be balanced against the possibility of favoritism or other undesirable influences. A properly conducted member selection process for the neighborhood group should insure a group broadly representative of interests in the community. That representation, combined with the experience of the group members and the assistance of the principal should minimize the dangers of abuse. (For schools which deal with older students, especially high schools, some student representation on subcommittees or task forces in this area is mandatory.)

STUDENT CONCERNS

Summary: How Much and About What?

How much control should be shared is directly related to the area of school policy and to particular situations or events in each of those policy areas. In every instance, the principal and the neighborhood group will want to be guided by an on-the-scene assessment of their situation including (as mentioned above):

1. the interests and capabilities (both current and potential of the shared-control group;

2. other interested people and groups;

3. legal restraints;

4. the availability of time and opportunities for involvement;

5. the potential effect of any action on the achievement of the school's goals.

Even in response to a crisis, community involvement does not emerge suddenly and blanket all areas of school policy. Rather it develops in a more or less cumulative fashion. Interest in personnel policies may give way to interest in budget development and be followed by a concern with the potential of open classrooms. A group's concentration on the lines around its school's attendance area may turn into a focus on the kind of facilities available to its children. The principal's task is to encourage the accumulation of experience and to assist its transfer from one area to another. Because community involvement develops over time through experience with a number of different policy areas, it is neither necessary nor desirable to attempt to decide, at one point in time, the total distribution of control in all policy areas, in all situations.

However, the impossibility of predicting every aspect of community involvement does NOT mean that the principal should not have a comprehensive and detailed plan. Uncertainty and poor preparation are two of the most certain ways to arouse charges of bad faith from neighborhoods. The principal's commitment to involvement and the overall guidelines within which the principal believes it should proceed, must be clearly and publicly stated. Those guidelines can then be applied to particular contingencies or they can be revised as events dictate. (See Part V, "How Should the Group be Organized?")

The sharing of control means exactly that; but the intensity and scope of the group's involvement in any particular decision is likely to be a matter for mutual and continuing resolution. However, realism suggests that the principal's pivotal location and other responsibilities will reinforce his influence in this process. That will be especially the case where neighborhood involvement does not already have an established base and must be solicited by the school's leaders. The relative

dominance of the principal is unavoidable and from many points of view desirable, but it may also distract from some of the essential purposes and prerequisites of involvement. The amount of neighborhood involvement necessary to achieve, for example, increased support for the school, is quite high. Relatively large numbers of people need to be quite extensively involved before the sum total of that involvement can create a reservoir of support. The influence of the professional should be carefully monitored and regulated (both by the professional and by the community) so that it does not stifle neighborhood initiative and development.

We have made the point several times that community involvement is not a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. The amount and focus of shared control can be regulated. It can also be manipulated. This manual outlines the working features of successful involvement and it is always possible to use that knowledge to sabotage or dilute participation. But misusing involvement means that nothing about the school will be improved and in fact the likelihood of a rapid slide into school/community hostility will be greatly increased. Again, involvement is successful when it is significant and communities can tell the difference between authentically shared control and public relations manipulation.

MANIPULATION

Communications Responsibilities

The obvious purpose of communicating from the neighborhood to the school is to get all relevant points of view before the school's decision makers. However, people's interests are never expressed very evenly and there is no necessary relation between the amount of squeaking and the amount of grease which is actually needed. A representative neighborhood group, whose work and interests are visible and sincere can help to guarantee the accuracy of communications, even from the less vocal parts of the neighborhood. The group will want to be sure that it is active enough in soliciting

FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

neighborhood participation to reach those people who have something to say but who might not otherwise have a change to express themselves. The group will also need to decide how receptive it will be to individual grievances as distinct from those which may affect groups as a whole. The danger in accepting individual grievances is that the group may be viewed as only the spokesman for special pleading. Concentrating too heavily on individual as opposed to more widely shared concerns can carry the group away from its policy orientation. On the other hand, a basic way in which groups establish their own credibility and build support is by assisting individuals with their legitimate problems. The balance to be struck is between being responsive to needy individuals and maintaining an effective presence for the school as a whole. In a similar fashion the group will also need to determine the extent to which it should be concerned with problems that are district-wide and city-wide as opposed to strictly local matters.

In general, the involvement mechanism should provide for the following things.

1. A central phone number and mailing address should be publicized to receive neighborhood opinions. The phone numbers and addresses of the group's leadership should also be public.

2. Subcommittee and task force meetings should be held in various non-school locations around the neighborhood and the scheduled rotation of those meetings should be announced well in advance. Meetings should be held at different times of day to allow everyone an opportunity to attend. Over the course of a year, meetings should have occurred at all appropriate times and places in the attendance area.

3. Meetings themselves should be summarized and reported--including statements from the neighborhood--through appropriate media including local newspapers. (Again, this should be done with attention to the languages spoken by the school's constituencies.)

4. Wherever the issue is important enough to justify the effort, neighborhood attitudes should be tapped in a systematic fashion. A postcard survey, an informal door-to-door canvass, or a table at the school can be used for this purpose with simple questionnaires prepared to find out how people feel about particular

school issues. Efforts of this sort may be especially important for a newly established group to gain visibility and also to validate the group's own sense of priorities.

5. Members of the group should be constantly encouraged to seek out the opinions and interests of neighborhood people beyond their immediate circle of contacts. At open houses and other education-related events, teachers and principals should make an effort to introduce group members to people whom they have not yet met (and of course, the group members should return the favor introducing community people to the school's staff).

6. In all encounters with their fellow citizens, members of the group should be certain to register whatever shades of opinion--both favorable and unfavorable--are expressed. Since the group exists to encourage, register, (and to refine) neighborhood inputs, people should be actively encouraged to express their opinions and desires.

* * * * * *

TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Communicating from the school back to the community probably accounts for most of the work of most of the community groups now operating in schools. The function is an important one, even if, given the purposes of a shared-control group, certain cautions may be advisable. Obviously, a broadly based group of citizens, drawn from all parts of the community can be a marvelous resource in telling the public what the school is doing, and in building support for its programs. The intention is fine but great care must be exercised so that the group's independence is not compromised. If the group becomes merely the publicity agent or cake sale organizer for the school, then its unique ability to serve as a vehicle for broadly based, policy-relevant participation will be seriously lessened. For that reason, the group needs to judge for itself the communications tasks it will undertake on the school's behalf. Since, as the group grows in experience, it will also have had a greater hand in school decisions, its defense and interpretation of

school policy can be expected to grow naturally. Finally, all communications with the community must be phrased in clear, direct, concise, and relevant language. In addition, any statement from the group should be honest in intent as well as execution and should present all sides of an issue. (Cf., Part VI, "How to Help--Media Support.")

V. HOW SHOULD THE GROUP BE ORGANIZED?

In administration, as in architecture, form follows function. The decisions already made about what the group is to do, how intensely and comprehensively it should be involved, etc., will have a bearing on how it should be structured. Structure deals with aspects such as size, leadership, and decision-making procedure through which the group conducts its business.

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A representative group acting on behalf of the community has an obligation to make its decisions in a democratic fashion. In relatively close-knit groups (those which share goals, respect, and experience), decisions often seem to "emerge" through consensus. Where this level of agreement occurs naturally, and where achieving consensus is not done by overriding people's interests, it is a desirable thing. (See discussion of "consensus" and "informed consent," pp. 11-12.) On the other hand, some groups, especially newly established ones, are not so cohesive that they can use this procedure. Even the most close knit groups sometimes deal with issues which are so volatile and deeply felt that consensus would be an unrealistic expectation. In such cases, decisions may be made by majority votes among the members. Where votes are used to determine the group's decisions, it will be necessary to consider in advance what proportion of the group constitutes a quorum. A small proportion may lead to allegations about the lack of representation on some issues. A large required quorum, two-thirds for example, may cripple action where attendance is low, or it may allow a faction to block action simply by not attending. In this, as in other situations, the premium will be on good judgment and good faith in local circumstances. The group may wish to require "extraordinary majorities" (for example, two-thirds of those present beyond the quorum) for its most important decisions such as proposals about personnel, or the budget, or revision of the group itself. The matter of voting can be simplified, if subcommittees are used to develop and refine alternatives prior to the group's action.

DECISION PROCEDURES

A note of caution about voting. Although majority decisions are basic to our sense of fair play, the principal should remember that votes can lead to an emotional as well as a numerical division. Instead of unifying the group, votes may create clearly visible sets of winners and losers. That may or may not be a problem, and it may or may not be avoidable. Again, the success of the group will rest on its own judgment and the support of the principal.

Groups making serious decisions often encounter procedural wrangles about who can speak and for how long, what is and isn't relevant to the decision, how and when the decision itself can be made, etc. The standard reference for these occasions is Robert's Rules of Order, but the details and formality required by Robert's Rules sometimes makes it unacceptable to groups. More informal procedural guides, based on group dynamics research can be found in the National Training Laboratories--National Education Association Selected Readings Series (1961), especially No. 1,"Group Development," and No. 2, "Leadership in Action." Whatever procedural guides are used, they must be established by the group early in its career since the rules of the game must be known before the game begins. This establishment usually occurs when the group adopts a set of by-laws to govern its operations. The by-laws should clearly state (A) the group's purpose and the limits on its activities, (B) the rights and responsibilities of its members, and (C) the procedures for the group's operation. Wide circulation of clearly written by-laws can head off later misunderstandings.

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CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

A basic choice that will face most group members will be the determination of how they should relate to their constituents. When both they and their constituents are agreed on a course of action, there is no problem. When the two disagree, the question of who prevails becomes important. Basically, the community representative has three choices:

-- The "delegate" who does what the constituent wants even though he or she may personally disagree.

-- The "trustee" who does what his or her own best judgment indicates rather than what the constituent wants.

-- The "politico" who decides every question on its merits.

Each position has a great deal to recommend it. Moreover, the dilemma of choosing the "correct" position has been around since the beginning of representative government. This is one of the areas in which there are a few hints but no totally right answers. The best guides seem to be: (a) to recognize the difficulties inherent in this situation; (b) to be especially sensitive in the early days of the group's existence to neighborhood opinions about the proper relation between representatives and constituents; and (c) to maintain the integrity of the group's election process so that, whatever style of representation is chosen, the group's members remain basically accountable to the neighborhood. The group's members should keep in mind that many people feel that the only way they are represented is if their representatives do exactly what they, the people, want done. Communities can become disillusioned and angry very suddenly if, out of conscience, the representative disagrees and acts on that disagreement. When it arises, this choice between conscience and constituency can be a profound problem.

Whether or not the group's representatives should be bound to follow whatever the neighborhood wants (the delegate style), or whether the constituents must accept their representatives' actions even when they disagree with those actions (the trustee style), is a choice that probably cannot be made in the absence of specific contextual information. It is also a choice that must be made by all of the participants themselves, and if necessary, through trial, error, and conflict.

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The best size for a group can be described in terms of upper and lower limits as related to the group's purposes. The lower limit for group size will be determined by the need to insure adequate representation for all points of view--including especially minority points of view. Very small groups (say, five or six members) may be charged with being a clique or an elite. Very small groups will probably not allow most interested people a reasonable opportunity to participate

SIZE

either currently or in the near future. A group that is too small places too great a burden on its members. On a part-time basis, community people will not have the time to become knowledgeable participants and to sustain that participation in each of the major areas of school policy.

The upper limit of a group will be largely determined by the same factors. For example, beyond a certain point, a group can become unwieldy; it will begin to require so many subcommittees and executive sessions and other group management devices that the sense of shared participation and responsibility may be damaged. Exactly where that upper limit may be is related to the preferences which group members have for conducting their own business: according to member interests and purposes, some groups may wish to operate as a "committee-of-the-whole," but it is more likely that the group will want to use a variety of specialized subcommittees. Election to the group should confer some status and responsibility on its members. If everyone who wants to, can become a member, then the sense of responsibility and status that should be attached to membership will be spread so thinly among all the members that the group will be meaningless. In the case of very large groups, it is difficult to know just who is responsible and who is to be held accountable for what decisions. Moreover, when every interested person is already a member of the group, there are no critics or alternates waiting to replace those members who fail to maintain the confidence of the community.

These considerations point to a group of between nine and fifteen members. The group should have an uneven number of members to minimize the chances of stalemate when it is divided.

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DURATION AND FREQUENCY

A neighborhood involvement group needs to be in continuous existence and its activities need to be timed to anticipate the school calendar. For newly established groups, terms of office should be staggered so that about a third of the group is scheduled for selection each year. The scheduled expiration of the terms of office of one-third of the members plus the inevitable vacancies due to

resignations and family mobility, will mean that about half the seats will be up for re-election each year. The terms of office for members of a newly established group can be determined at the first meeting, with one-, two-, and three-year terms allotted by some chance method.

A procedure for replacing members between elections will be necessary. Some members will move out of the neighborhood, others will resign for personal reasons, and still others may be removed by the group for failure to attend meetings. (The group may wish to consider adopting a rule such as that three absences within a year will result in automatic removal.) The group should, by majority vote, appoint a replacement to serve until the next regularly scheduled election.

The frequency of the group's meetings will be related to the calendar of school decisions but in any case, the entire group will need to meet on a monthly basis. For the group as a whole, meetings should be scheduled on the same day and time throughout the year (e.g., "the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30"). Whenever possible, an agenda of items to be considered should be included in the notice of the upcoming meeting which will be mailed to each group member each month. The agenda should also be posted conspicuously in several locations around the neighborhood.

Many decisions about such key matters as personnel and budget occur every year at the same time because of routine reporting requirements to district and State officials. A calendar of these anticipated deadlines should be prepared with the assistance of the principal and headquarters officials. The neighborhood group can then plan its own involvement (committee work, information sessions, etc.) so that its participation is informed and timely. It needs to be noted that the most effective schedule of activities will not coincide with peaks of popular involvement such as the opening of school--by then, most key decisions will already be made.

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It is clear that a group which has the increased involvement of the neighborhood as its purpose should conduct its business in meetings that are open to the public. On the other hand, some matters will require confidential fact-finding and deliberation. Such closed meetings should only be used when they are absolutely

PUBLIC MEETINGS

necessary. If all business is determined in executive sessions or private meetings prior to an open meeting, the public meetings will be empty performances that will discourage those non-members who might otherwise attend.

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DEGREE OF INTERNAL SPECIALIZATION

The amount of specialization within the group has already been related to size. The larger the group, the greater the need for internal specialization. The virtues of having specific people knowledgeable about particular aspects of school policy should be balanced against the need to develop the expertise and familiarity of the group as a whole. Many groups establish in their by-laws a series of topical subcommittees which then report to the whole group. If this procedure is employed, the group may wish to appoint subcommittees (or more simply, to ask particular individuals to concentrate) on the five areas of school policy previously identified: (a) curriculum; (b) budget; (c) teacher personnel; (d) administrative personnel; and (e) student concerns.

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LEADERSHIP

Leadership is one of those obviously desirable but sometimes elusive characteristics. It is essential that the group's leadership be indigenous to the neighborhood. Whether or not that leadership develops depends heavily on the attitude and action of the principal. But principals also need to be concerned not to be too helpful. In assisting the group or in helping to make it function more efficiently, the principal may block its independence and initiative. Leadership develops, if it develops at all, through serious and responsible engagement with real issues. The risk of failing is the price of growth. The attitude of the principal must be supportive, encouraging, patient, and positive.

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Group characteristics should change as the nature of the problems changes. It must be possible to modify group features which have not proven successful. Any feature of the by-laws or charter of the group should be open to amendment by two-thirds of the group's entire membership.

REVISION

AND

MODIFICATION

VI. HOW TO HELP

There are many ways in which the principal can help the group succeed. In this part, the necessary resources for successful participation at the individual and at the group level are identified. Principals scarcely need more things to do or more responsibility yet this entire manual focusses on their role. In one sense, there are no apologies for that. Relations between urban schools and communities are in great need of improvement and that improvement is instrumental enough in its contribution to other school goals to justify more of the principal's attention than it ordinarily gets. Still, principals are busy people and personal responsibility for every one of the tasks outlined here would distract them from other important jobs. The range of options included in this handbook is purposefully comprehensive. Principals and communities will adopt some features but not others. Second, many of these tasks can and should be performed by other school staff. Delegation to teachers, for example, can reap the same benefits of their support for this program as can be expected from community involvement as a whole. And third, the evidence indicates that successful involvement breeds successful involvement. Once a mechanism of shared control has been established the principal should find it a resourceful partner that bears some of the decision-making burdens now too narrowly distributed.

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OPPORTUNITY

The simple opportunity to participate is the first requisite. The group's existence helps, but is not enough to insure the fulfillment of this requirement. Announcing the formation of a neighborhood group and electing it is only the beginning. Neighborhood involvement, at the control-sharing level, is not a standard operating procedure, especially in big cities. The principal must therefore be alert to the necessity to be continually supportive of the group and its work at a high level to attract substantial neighborhood participation.

The point is an important one. The opportunity for involvement represented by the neighborhood group must be involvement of the sort that makes a difference. The neighborhood must see it as potentially important, and potentially effective. People can tell the difference between authentic groups that offer real participatory opportunities and symbolic groups that are not intended to change anything. Decision making about education is a complicated and demanding task. One of the most certain ways to prevent neighborhoods from rising to that challenge is to prematurely cut down the size or the relevance of the task. A trivialized opportunity then yields disappointing results. Because teachers and parents take cues from the principal his actions and attitudes are critical. If the cues indicate solid expectations, trust, and patience, the group's chances for success will be materially improved.

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In addition to the existence of a structural opportunity for involvement, it is apparent that group members must have the time and energy to take part. The people who are least represented in school decision making--the poor--have to spend almost all of their time and energy struggling to survive. Anything left over is likely to go to family responsibilities or to other, non-public uses. In order to succeed, the neighborhood group must take that reality into account.

TIME AND ENERGY

The first way to deal with this has already been discussed--provide an opportunity that makes the act of involvement worth the effort. The second way is to encourage meetings to be held at times and places convenient to group members. The third way is to provide members with a modest stipend or honorarium on an annual basis. The stipend, which might be as little as $5 or $10 per meeting can be used to pay for transportation and babysitting services. It may also help to offset some of the income (from second jobs and overtime) which group members will be giving up in order to attend meetings. Where the money stipend

might cause problems, services in kind (babysitting, for example) may be arranged. For principals who are used to having to meet union requirements that professional teachers be paid for "extra" duties, the recommendation that neighborhood group members receive a small amount for their services should not be a surprising one. The amounts involved are certainly no incentive for exploitation, but they should make possible participation (and its associated benefits) which would not otherwise be available.

Other ways to augment available time and energy are discussed below (see "staff" and "training").

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MOBILIZATION

Successful groups are those groups which are willing to exploit all their resources. It does a neighborhood little good to have residents who feel strongly about the schools, who have concrete proposals to make, and who have influence to spend if those feelings are not expressed, the proposals are not pushed, or the influence is not applied. The rate at which neighborhoods mobilize to exploit their resources is one of the keys to success.

The main responsibility for this belongs within the neighborhood representatives themselves but the principal can help in several ways. First, by accommodating the group and by cooperating with it, the principal can demonstrate to the community that its mobilization makes a difference. By helping the group to achieve some early successes, the principal can help diminish the feeling of helplessness that blocks action. The principal can also encourage the staff to help. If teachers are knowledgeable and supportive of the neighborhood group, and if they are encouraged (or required) to make home visits and other community contacts, they can help the community get together. If the school has social workers or a school-community agent assigned to it (or if the principal can influence workers from other city agencies in the neighborhood to help) they can be enlisted in the same effort. If the school does not have social workers or a school community agent, the principal and the community can begin working to get one.

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The principal may be even more directly helpful in the area of material resources. Successful groups, especially in areas such as education, must be able to communicate with their constituents. They should have money for miscellaneous expenses. The principal can help by making the school's duplicating machines, phones, space, and other facilities available to authorized parent and community representatives. The principal may also wish to consider assigning administrative staff or releasing teacher time to help with particular tasks.

MATERIAL RESOURCES

The most useful contribution in this category comes from the group having money to support its own operation. That kind of money is rare in school budgets, but not impossible to find. An established group may be able, perhaps with the principal's assistance, to get support from the central board, a foundation, a government agency or local civic or business groups. Assuming that the principal shares the goals of the group, then it is to the principal's self-interest to help the group succeed, since its success will be reflected in the educational achievement, responsiveness, and support for the school. That realization should reinforce the principal's motivation to help the group find the limited amount of money necessary to support its operation. (See the sample budgets in the Appendix.)

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Without adequate information the most carefully constructed group cannot succeed. Much of the information which the group will need to consider is available in the school. Budget records, program evaluations, achievement test scores, and so on should be given to the group. Of course, proper safeguard should be used--for example, the confidentiality of individual student and employee records should be maintained. The interpretation of school records (e.g., performance comparisons among different schools, the identification of trends) is a sensitive matter which will require careful attention. However,

INFORMATION

without relevant data, the group's decisions cannot be properly informed nor can the group become more sophisticated in its assistance to the school.

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School administrators have a lot of respect for the amount of training and expertise necessary to support high-quality education decisions. That sort of knowledge can be built up by participating in the group, but it is a slow process which can be helped along by training and by staff assistance.

TRAINING

Many newly established groups need considerable orientation and assistance to become effective participants in the decision-making process. All orientation or training should be as carefully planned as any other lesson. Orientation sessions may be brief (20-minute?) exposures to the major areas of school policy. It may be possible to combine some early group meetings with these sessions. Training sessions are more extensive and will need to be scheduled separately. The use of outside experts (from the central office, from local colleges or universities, or from other already established neighborhood groups) should be considered. It is often useful for group members to play specific roles or to simulate decisions in which they will later participate. Both orientation and training sessions should be backed up with written materials. If, over the course of a year these materials cover all facets of the school, they can then be collected and made available to interested people and especially to new group members as a comprehensive introduction to the school's decision making.

The principal should also explore the possibility that the parents may wish to conduct orientation sessions for the professional staff. Knowledge about the community is difficult to gain for teachers who do not reside in the neighborhood: parents and teachers could both profit by such interaction.

The second way in which the group's substantive knowledge can be increased is through staff assistance. The most successful groups are those which have independent, professional help, for example through child advocates, or through community

STAFF ASSISTANCE

development specialists. Unfortunately, that sort of help is not very often found at the neighborhood school level. The principal might also explore the possibility of teachers receiving credit for in-service training in return for community work. Those teachers who are already enrolled in graduate school might get course credit for their work in community training programs. Neighborhood groups can also take advantage of the efforts of city-wide watchdog and special interest groups in education. The possibility of using interns or other graduate students from graduate schools of education should be explored.

[A Note on the Distribution of Resources]

One of the principal's chief responsibilities is to be certain that the resources in the school's control are impartially available. The preceding sections have discussed those things which can help neighborhood people be successful participants. The more time, energy, access to staff help, and so on, which any individual has, the more likely it is that individual can pursue his or her own points of view. It is inevitable that some people within the group will have more of the resources necessary to succeed than will others. "Resources" is a neutral word, but "advantages" is not. When time, energy, and substantive knowledge are applied to a particular position about what the neighborhood school should or should not be doing, then it is clear that those resources are also partisan weapons. Thus, they should be as freely available to all participants as can be arranged.

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The closest, most frequent, and most important interaction is that which occurs between the school staff, especially the teachers, and the community. Whether or not teachers will have a responsive or a disdainful and indifferent orientation to their neighborhood clientele may determine a great deal about the successfulness of neighborhood involvement. The teachers' apprehensions that lay people will cut into professional prerogatives should be

STAFF ATTITUDES

understandable to principals. One way to allay those apprehensions is through careful, public planning of the involvement mechanisms with the participation of key teachers. Every task that can be jointly undertaken between teachers and neighborhood residents should contribute to mutual understanding. Thus, the citizen's group should be careful to invite, encourage, and utilize teacher participation wherever it is appropriate. Additionally, the principal should demonstrate through his or her own actions, that the neighborhood is a respected partner of decisions about teaching and learning.

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Another factor, mentioned earlier, which contributes to involvement is the opportunity for the group to have a sense of specific achievement early in its career. Where involvement has grown from a particular crisis and in those instances where the crisis is successfully resolved, that resolution can give the group visibility, motivation, legitimacy, and experience. If possible, the group should tackle some relatively soluble problems, relatively early in its career. These problems should be matters of local importance--getting a stop sign installed or changed to a traffic light, securing additional playground equipment or longer hours for its use, etc. The risk in this is that problems which can be solved fairly quickly are likely to be not very important; therefore, the principal should help to insure that the group takes responsibility for fundamental, long-range policy matters as well as for more achievable near-term items. An atmosphere of success can also be created: the principal should be alert for opportunities to commend the group's work and to publicize its activities.

EARLY GROUP SUCCESS

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The amount of attention which the neighborhood group gets from the local communications media is the last factor considered here. The visibility of the group will help it to succeed. Its ability to represent all parts of the neighborhood will be enhanced if local newspapers, radio, and TV stations publicize the group's

MEDIA SUPPORT

activities. Of course, the neighborhood school is unlikely to attract much attention from the national networks or even from the local commercial stations, but most cities have non-commercial UHF channels (sometimes municipally sponsored) that can be used to publicize the work of the neighborhood group. The central office of most city systems will also have TV and radio public relations specialists who are supposed to help school groups.

These media opportunities can dramatically expand the group's visibility, but the old stand-bys of school-community relations such as newsletters, flyers, and public meetings should not be overlooked. In all of these instances, the initiative and influence of the principal (with headquarters specialists in public relations, for example) can be an important assist to the group.

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE BUDGETS

Budget A: High Option

Salary - school/community agent (acts as staff to shared control group, assists in school/home linkage, etc.)	$12,000
Personnel benefits (20% of salary)	2,400
Overhead support (50% of salary)	6,000
	$20,400
Stipends - group members. 12 members (avg.), 18 meetings per year (8 sub-committees, 10 full group meetings) = 216 meetings @ $15 each	3,240
Facilities - Meeting space (contributed). Cost for 10 after-hours school openings @ $50 each	500
Supplies -	1,000
Phone -	500
Duplicating -	3,000
Mailing - (5 bi-monthly reports plus 2 mailings in connection with elections = 7 mailings to average of 500 households = 3,500 @ 8¢ each)	280
Election Conduct - A. Duplicating: see above	
B. Paid advertising in local media	500
C. Supervision of election	100
D. School openings (2)	100
Consulting and Training - (4 special sessions, one in each of school policy areas plus preparation of written materials)	1,000
TOTAL: HIGH OPTION	$30,620

Budget B: Low Option

(Budget B is probably the most realistic for urban schools without outside support for this purpose. It relies heavily on contributed space and services from school personnel.)

Salary - (None: school community agent services provided through delegation and released time from a number of school employees and coordination with other social welfare agencies in neighborhood.)	
Stipends - group members. (Minimal stipends to cover out-of-pocket transportation costs. Group child care provided at place of meeting.)	$ 200
Facilities - Meeting space (contributed). School openings (meetings to coincide to the maximum possible extent with other times school is open. Five special after-hours meetings @ $50 each	250
Supplies -	250
Phone - (Contributed)	
Duplicating -	500
Mailings - (7 mailings to average of 500 households = 3,500 @ 1.7¢ each*)	60
Election Conduct - A. Duplicating (see above)	
B. Paid advertising	500
C. Supervision (contributed)	
D. School openings (2)	100
Consulting and Training - contributed by district and school staff	
TOTAL: LOW OPTION	$1,860

*Shared control groups would be eligible for a non-profit organization indicia entitling them to the reduced rate. Mail must be organized by zip code, delivered to post office, and paid in advance.

APPENDIX II: SAMPLE BY-LAWS*

(The by-laws of the group should be written and available to all interested individuals.)

I. Officers

There will be a chairman and a secretary elected annually by the group at its first meeting after school opens in the Fall.

II. Member Selection (see "Handbook," Section II)

III. Subcommittees

A. Subcommittees may be established and discharged by a majority of the group. They may be temporary or permanent, depending on their tasks.

B. Each subcommittee shall elect its own chairman and secretary. Other people may be invited to meet with the subcommittee; e.g., students, teachers, administrators, etc.

C. Permanent subcommittees may be established in the most important policy areas.

IV. Program

The group will plan a program and agenda for the year's meetings. The plan should include specific details of who is to achieve what by what time.

V. Meetings

A. The annual program will indicate the time and place of regular meetings for the year (and to the extent possible, the topics of each meeting).

B. Meetings should occur on a monthly basis.

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*These by-laws have been extensively revised from Richard K. Hofstrander and Lloyd J. Phipps, "Advisory Councils for Education: A Handbook," Rurban Educational Development Laboratory (Champaign-Urbana: College of Education, University of Illinois, 1971); ERIC ED 057213.

C. Special meetings may be called, or regular meetings may be canceled by a majority vote of the whole group.

D. Decision procedures (e.g., voting, parliamentary operation, etc.) will be established within the first two meetings and will govern the group's procedures in any case of dissent.

E. Regular and subcommittee meetings will be publicly announced in advance and will be open to the public.

F. A written record of each meeting will be kept by the secretary and bi-monthly reports will be disseminated through appropriate channels to the neighborhood.

G. All meetings shall include an opportunity for non-members to make known their views on items relevant to the business of the shared-control group.

VI. Responsibilities of Members

Each member is expected to prepare for, and participate in all regular meetings, and to serve on subcommittees when requested.